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CORONAVIRUS

Scandinavian festival canceled

53rd annual event was planned for June

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

The Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival, one of the North Coast's most popular cultural traditions, is canceled over concerns about the coronavirus.

The 53rd annual festival was scheduled from June 19 to June 21 at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds. The festival association and the Astoria Scandinavian Heritage Association announced the decision Wednesday night.

"The Scandinavian Midsummer Festival is a time we come together to celebrate the long summer days and our heritage through music, dance, food and community," Tony Larson, the festival's chairman, and Carla Oja, the chairwoman, said in a statement. "It will still be a time to celebrate. We recommend people plan a midsummer celebration at

their homes with their family this year."

They encouraged people to enjoy Scandinavian culture and post pictures on social media.

Oja, in an interview, said the decision took into account uncertainty over the severity of the coronavirus by late June, the festival preparations by local Scandinavian lodges kicking off this month and entertainers coming from as far away as Norway and Finland.

"There's a lot of the population that hasn't been exposed to this virus," Oja said. "And so who knows which way it will turn? And so we are going to be good citizens and call it now."

The festival sold around 4,200 passes last year and has seen around 10,000 people walk through the Clatsop County Fairgrounds over three days. The festival association lost money on advertisements for this year's festival, but not as much as it could have with low attendance, Oja said.

See Festival, Page A5



The 53rd annual Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival is canceled because of the coronavirus.



Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Jessica Todd demonstrates how to do an algebra problem while filming with her iPad for students to see.

Local schools examine remote learning options



Annette Johnson peeks through the window where packets and computers for online education could be picked up at Warrenton Grade School on Friday morning.

Quick adjustments to the coronavirus

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

Before the coronavirus had become a reality, closing schools and businesses and pushing many human interactions online, Andrew Morgan's English literature students at Astoria High School read "The Masque of the Red Death."

It is a classic Edgar Allan Poe horror story about a plague and one group's efforts to avoid contagion. Spoiler: "Things don't end well," Morgan said.

See Schools, Page A6

Track coach looks back, to the future in Astoria

Season had potential for state qualifiers

By GARY HENLEY
The Astorian

When it comes to high school sports, Bob Ellsberg has seen it all. Up until now, anyway.

With the cancellation of the spring sports season, the throwing events coach for the Astoria track team is seeing a first in his 50-some years of coaching — the absence of an outdoor track season.

"To me, spring is track time, and it's been that way since I was 22," said Ellsberg, now 73. "It's been wonderful to me. The kids kind of make your life, so that I have something to look forward to."

Regrets, disappointment, and "coulda, woulda, shoulda." That's what this year's spring sports season will be remembered for.

Like other coaches, Ellsberg agreed with the decision to cancel the season. But, like others, that doesn't mean he likes it.

The season could have been one of the biggest years yet for local high school throwers. And that's coming after a year in which two area prep athletes won three state titles in throwing events.

Ellsberg says there were some



Gary Henley/The Astorian

Bob Ellsberg, doing what he normally does every spring — coaching one of his throwers at a track meet.

"sure things" out there this spring.

Such as an Astoria thrower who was actually endangering passing motorists with his preseason practice throws in the discus, and a Warrenton athlete who was ready to cap his senior season with more school record throws and likely another first place medal or two at state.

And a few other throwers would have contributed big points in the team scoring, including several from Astoria, where Ellsberg has coached since the late 1970s.

"I've coached here for over 40 years, and in all those years, there were only three where we haven't taken a thrower to state," he

said. "And this would have been the year where my throwers would have gotten their 100th medal."

"It would have been a great showcase for them this year," he said of this year's graduating class of throwers.

The list includes outgoing seniors who won't get their "shot," so to speak, like Astoria's Brooklyn Zerangue, Seaside's Derrick Bennett and Mark Warren of Warrenton. And others, who fortunately will be back next season, including Astoria's Kelsey Fausett and Warrenton's Triston Scott, both juniors.

See Coach, Page A7

Astoria Ferry flees Pier 39

Old vessel docks near downtown

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

The Tourist No. 2 abruptly moved from Pier 39 to a dock near downtown amid disagreements between the ferry's owner, Christian Lint, and Pier 39's Floyd Holcom.

Videos and photos posted on Facebook show the 1924 vintage ferry pulling out of Pier 39 on Thursday morning towing a dock used for boarding. The ferry tied up next to a piling field owned by local developers Chester Trabucco and Stephen Allen just west of the Sixth Street

viewing platform.

Lint, who recently listed the Tourist No. 2 — dubbed the Astoria Ferry — for sale on Craigslist for \$225,000, could not be reached for comment.

Holcom posted pictures on Facebook of a broken electrical hookup he said was part of the damage caused when the ferry left without notice.

"Nobody knew he was going to move his boat until he was already out of here," Holcom said by phone. "Unfortunately, that took us all by surprise. And the way he did it, he unfortunately damaged our pier."

See Ferry, Page A5

The Astoria Ferry is moored near the Sixth Street viewing platform.

Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

